

## **FY14 FUNDING PLANS: \$155M INVESTMENT IN YOUNG KIDS**

On January 23, the First Things First Board approved regional funding plans representing a \$155 million investment in young kids during fiscal year 2014.

The plans represent the second year of a 3-year planning cycle and include the regions' projected spend-down of carry-forward balances, Chief Regional Officer Michelle Katona told the Board.

The regions considered the latest data from regional needs and assets reports, current funded strategies, and future growth. They also took in to account recent decisions at the Board level, including changes to regional allocations made by the Board after consideration of tobacco tax revenues, population changes in the regions, and its revised sustainability model. Regions will continue to monitor spending in current strategies, examine their FY15 funding allocations (to be approved in October 2013) and revise their spending plans accordingly.

Katona also stressed the increased cross-regional coordination and collaboration that is helping maximize resources available for young kids.

Following Katona's overview, FTF regional directors presented their FY 14 funding plans (see successes on page 2). After the plans were approved, Board members expressed their thanks to the regional councils and staff for their hard work.

"I am so impressed with the volunteers and staff; the obvious dedication and commitment they have shown," said Janice Decker, the newest member of the Board. "This is such a huge undertaking with so many tentacles."

Chair Steve Lynn said this funding plan cycle demonstrates that regions are learning from their experience with strategies and making tough decisions to fund programs to scale and help future generations of children.

"We're coming in to maturity; strategies have a track record, and we have a future to consider," Lynn said. "Regions are deciding not only what will be here from year to year, but generation to generation, and putting things in place that will benefit children long after we are gone."

## **STATEWIDE SUMMARY OF FY 14 REGIONAL FUNDING PLANS**

- **Early Learning Quality/Access: \$75.5 million (49%)** Includes Quality First, QF and pre-kindergarten scholarships, transition to kindergarten, inclusion of children with special needs, expansion (increased slots/capital expenses), center based literacy and family, friends and neighbors.
- **Family Support: \$38.9 million (25%)** Includes home visitation, parent education (community-based training and curriculum development), family resource centers, native language enrichment, newborn follow-up, coordination, outreach and awareness, food security, and Reach Out and Read.
- **Health: \$20.4 million (13%)** mental health & child care health consultation, oral health, nutrition/obesity/ physical activity, prenatal outreach, developmental and sensory screening, care coordination/medical home, comprehensive preventive health programs, health insurance enrollment, injury prevention, physician education and outreach, and recruitment.
- **Professional Development: \$7.9 million (5%)** Includes TEACH and non-TEACH scholarships, Professional REWARD\$, community-based professional development, director mentoring/training, learning labs, language and communication consultation, conference scholarships and recruitment in to the field.
- **Evaluation: \$7.7 million (5%)** Includes regional needs and assets additions, regional family support and early childhood workforce studies, and statewide evaluation.
- **Community Awareness: \$3.2 million (2%)** Includes community outreach, community awareness and media.
- **Coordination: \$1.3 million (1%)** Includes court teams, community partnerships and service coordination.

## **SUCCESS STORIES PUT A FACE ON REGIONAL FUNDING**

The following are success stories shared with the statewide FTF Board as part of the funding plan approval process. They highlight the impact that FTF-funded strategies are having in communities throughout Arizona. They are listed in the order that they were presented to the Board. In cases where no success story was part of the presentation, the region was asked to select one following the meeting.

### **PHOENIX REGIONAL AREA**

**North Phoenix** – Family Resources Centers are a wonderful asset to parents in the area, including one gentleman who found himself single-handedly raising his first child – in his 60s! The gentleman – who works nights – found help through parenting classes and with finding child care to meet his unique needs.

**South Phoenix** – The co-location of various early learning strategies at one school in the Roosevelt District has created a continuum of support for parents and educators alike! Among the programs available there are: pre-kindergarten scholarships, T.E.A.C.H., Professional REWARDS, health and mental health consultants and a Family Resource Center. Through the loan forgiveness strategy, the facility also has a child psychologist on site.

**Central Phoenix** – The region's family support grantees are working in concert to ensure families are aware of and have access to coordinated support services. At one preschool, for example, outreach to the school's administrators resulted in 3 or 4 families being referred for services that same day!

**GRIC** – The region's pre-kindergarten expansion strategy – planned, funded and implemented in partnership with the Gila River Indian Community – will ensure that 84 percent of 4-year-olds in the region have access to preschool within the next five years.



### **NORTHEAST REGIONAL AREA**

**Coconino** – The region's commitment to early learning – through the expansion of Quality First centers and homes, child care scholarships and the Summer Transition to Kindergarten sites – led County Superintendent of Schools Robert Kely to hail FTF as a leader in helping to close the school achievement gap *before* it starts!

**Navajo Nation** – The Regional Council's investment in pre-kindergarten scholarships has allowed four preschool classrooms to open in Kayenta and one to open in Pinon, providing early learning opportunities for 72 young children. Additional support from the regional council will allow that number to grow to 11 classrooms serving 150 children – and include young kids from the Chinle area – by then end of the next school year.

**Yavapai** – The native language preservation strategy – implemented in partnership with the Yavapai-Apache Nation – has resulted in 5 early childhood books being published in both Yavapai and Apache, both endangered languages.

**White Mountain Apache Tribe** – Community outreach efforts have resulted in a partnership with a local radio station that on a monthly basis allows the regional director to share information about FTF, the importance of early childhood and a featured strategy or grantee. The information is presented in both English and Apache.

**Navajo/Apache** – The region's oral health strategy is using tele-dentistry – where images are taken of a child's teeth in a remote area and reviewed electronically by a dentist in another part of the state – to bring much needed dental screenings and preventive dental services to underserved areas.



### SOUTHEAST REGIONAL AREA

**Pascua Yaqui Tribe** – The Tribal partner that is implementing the Home Visitation strategy has worked closely with the Tribal Head Start to access the center waiting list and provide support to the families that are ready to receive services. The partner also has worked with the Hiaki High School to provide services to teen parents. In addition, the Home Visitation staff participated in a training to become certified to give vision screenings and will assist the Head Start staff beginning the next school year so more young children will receive vision screenings.

**Tohono O'odham Nation** – Through a partnership with the T.E.A.C.H. program, 12 early educators have received their Child Development Associate credential. The local community college has established an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood and talks are under way with Northern Arizona University to establish a 2+2 program so that local early educators could earn a bachelor's degree without having to leave the nation.

**Santa Cruz** – The region's three Family Resource Centers are aligned with the elementary school districts they serve to support the early learning of children transitioning to kindergarten.

**South Pima** – The region's support for early learning has resulted in preschool programs being offered in communities where limited or no early learning programs previously existed, including the areas of Ajo, Amado and Three Points.

**North Pima** – The region's focus on professional development has brought skill-enhancing educational opportunities in the first quarter of implementation to 115 child care providers in the region.

**Central Pima** – The region is blending their funding with the Arizona Department of Health Services and issuing a joint Request for Grant Agreement to expand the research-proven Nurse Family Partnership home visitation strategy to more families in the region.



### WEST REGIONAL AREA

**La Paz / Mohave** – Four of the region's nine pre-kindergarten expansion sites currently in operation are in areas where the FTF-funded program is the only regulated early learning program that exists in the area, including Littlefield, Topock, Bouse, Mohave Valley). Agreements for two additional sites in remote communities – Salome and Quartzsite – are in process.

**Hualapai** – The region's one-time funding of several strategies in FY13 is leading to the expansion of early learning opportunities. The region is partnering with the tribe on a capital project that will become the only child care center in the community, and a Native Language Preservation strategy will result in books being available in the Hualapai Language to encourage early literacy in both languages.

**Colorado River Indian Tribes** – The region has partnered with the tribe to link its nutrition and obesity prevention strategies and provide more opportunities for young children to eat healthier and move more!

**Yuma** – The region's scholarship and recruitment strategies for therapists has led to services being available in the region, with the potential of eliminating long waiting lists and/or travel times for families to access needed therapies for their young kids.

**Cocopah Tribe** – Ten families completed training in the Family, Friend and Neighbor program through a partnership with the Yuma Regional Council. This included training on the importance of early childhood, child development, safety and early literacy.

### CENTRAL EAST REGION

**Pinal** – The region's family support strategy was able to help a mom who had 1 child with autism and another child displaying the traits of autism. By providing services specific to each child's needs, the child with autism is starting kindergarten on track for success, and his sibling is no longer displaying the traits of autism that he was mimicking from his brother.

**Gila** – The region's community-based parent education strategy is reaching the adult caregivers of every young child in this small, rural area. Caregivers – including adult and teenage parents, grandparents and child care providers – attend bi-weekly classes where they learn tips for interacting with their young kids and supporting children's development in positive ways. After class, they are able to put in to practice what they have learned in their child's preschool classroom.

**San Carlos** – Through a partnership with the San Carlos Apache Tribe, the region has begun implementing a Family, Friend and Neighbor strategy. Ten volunteer home care providers who provide child care for 1-4 children in their home will receive training, workshops, materials/equipment and awareness of health, safety and early childhood development that supports quality child care at home.

**Cochise** – Community outreach efforts in the region on helping to build both awareness of the importance of the birth to 5 years, but also to build the early childhood system. From military leaders to car dealerships, more and more of the community is engaging in the conversation on how to help young children succeed.

**Graham/Greenlee** – The region has made the ultimate commitment to improving the quality of early learning – 100% of its licensed child care centers are enrolled in Quality First!



### MARICOPA REGION

**Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community** – Funding from the FTF Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community Regional Council helped establish a pre-kindergarten classroom, the Tribe has made a commitment to take over the longer term continuation of funding for this early learning environment.

**Northeast Maricopa** – The regional council is collaborating with several early childhood partners to host The Ultimate Play Date – a family event focused on literacy and the importance of play for young kids!

**Northwest Maricopa** – The region's professional development strategy is working with high school students in the Peoria District's Early Childhood Career and Technical Education Program to establish an educational pathway whereby high school students graduate with the skills and tools needed to successfully enter the workforce or higher education.

**Southwest Maricopa** – The region's Family Resource Center in Gila Bend is a great example of leverage/blending funds to bring much-needed services to the community. This center – funded by FTF and operated jointly by Care 1<sup>st</sup> and the City of Gila Bend brings up to 26 separate programs to an area largely isolated due to its remote location and lack of transportation among residents.

**Central Maricopa** – Through the work of regional council members, FTF and early childhood have a growing voice on city committees looking to improve education in their communities, including Tempe, Guadalupe and Chandler.

**Southeast Maricopa** – The region's home visitation grantees have created a centralized screening and intake line so that parents in the region are paired with family support program and provider that best meets their needs.



## **DR. PAMELA POWELL ELECTED VICE CHAIR OF FTF BOARD**

Dr. Pamela Powell has been elected vice chair of the FTF Board to replace Dr. Eugene Thompson, who is in the process of moving out of state.

Board members expressed their respect and admiration for the extensive expertise in early childhood Dr. Powell brings to the Board.

Dr. Powell spent more than two decades as an elementary school teacher prior to arriving at Northern Arizona University. Currently, she is dedicated to helping pre-service teachers learn to utilize current, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate practices in their classrooms, which promote better learning for all students.

Dr. Powell received her bachelor's degree from Texas Tech University in Elementary Education, her Master's degree from Arizona State University in Elementary Education, with a specialization in reading, and a doctorate from Northern Arizona University in Curriculum and Instruction, with a focus on Early Childhood Education.

As an Associate Professor of Literacy and Early Childhood in the NAU College of Education, Dr. Powell and her students frequently participate in practicum experiences in schools in the Flagstaff Unified School District and in child development centers in the area.

In addition, she is very involved in the promotion of quality early learning opportunities for all children in the Arizona and our nation. She helped develop summer conferences and institutes in the NAU College of Education for early childhood educators across the state, which have provided a venue for continued conversation regarding quality early learning environments. She also is Northern Arizona AEYC's policy chair, AzAEYC Board's member at large, and participates on various early childhood committees and taskforces at NAU, in the Flagstaff community, and the state of Arizona.

"I am humbled and honored; I will serve in my best capacity," Powell said after the election. "Thank you for this opportunity."



## **REGIONAL BOUNDARY TASKFORCE MEETS NEXT IN TUCSON**

By statute, the FTF Board may re-examine its regions every two years to determine whether changes are needed or desired in order to better meet the needs of kids 5 and younger throughout Arizona.

This year, a taskforce has been appointed to carry out this important task, co-chaired by Jack Jewett, President and CEO of the Flinn Foundation and former FTF Board member, and Dr. Judy Jolley Mohraz, President and CEO of the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust.

The taskforce has met twice already and will meet two more times before providing its recommendations to the state Board.

The issues the taskforce is dealing with are varied. In some regions, there may be questions about whether a particular community or ZIP code would be better served by another region. In the large metropolitan areas, the issue may be whether more regions are needed or whether consolidation would yield better results for young kids.

The next meeting of the task force is scheduled for February 19 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the City of Tucson's Sentinel Building, Rillito and Sabino Rooms, 320 N. Commerce Park Loop.



### **REPORT DETAILS SUCCESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN IMPROVING COMPENSATION & CREDENTIALS OF EARLY EDUCATORS**

Research demonstrates that when child care and other early learning programs are of high quality and developmentally appropriate, children score higher on school readiness measures and do better in school. They also have better relationships with their peers and are more likely to graduate.

But the quality of early care and education depends on the professionalism, education and skills of the teacher. The 2012 Early Care and Education Workforce Survey – first administered in Arizona in 1997 and subsequently in 2001, 2004 and 2007 – provides a basis for better understanding evolving characteristics and conditions of Arizona's early care and education workforce. The most recent survey, conducted in 2012 and funded by FTF, is the basis for the summary on the status of Arizona's early childhood workforce.

The survey shows that – while early childhood teachers and assistant teachers are earning more college degrees – Arizona continues to struggle in two of the areas impacting retention of skilled early educators: wages and benefits.

Teacher turnover in the early care and education field remains high; averaging 30 percent or more. A national study found that teacher turnover is highest in child care centers with lower wages and lower levels of teacher education. The early care and education workforce is among the most poorly paid professionals in the United States, with the median wages for child care workers and preschool teachers being between \$7.90 and \$9.53 per hour.

Nationally, this is nearly one half of the salary earned by a kindergarten teacher, and lower than wages for parking attendants, cooks or cashiers.

This report explains the importance of a skilled early childhood workforce to educational success, examines the current qualifications and compensation of our state's early childhood teachers, and suggests ways that early learning program providers and policymakers can enhance school readiness for all kids by supporting efforts to ensure that Arizona's best educators are where they can make the biggest impact: with our youngest kids.

The full report will be available in the Board materials at [azff.gov](http://azff.gov), Attachment 9.

### **T.E.A.C.H. MODEL ASSESSED; IMPROVEMENTS RECOMMENDED**

In 2009, as part of ongoing efforts to build a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system that ensures all of Arizona's children are ready for school and set for life, First Things First selected the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project for Arizona.

T.E.A.C.H. is an acronym for **T**eacher **E**ducation **A**nd **C**ompensation **H**elps and it is a nationally recognized, comprehensive scholarship program that provides the early childhood workforce with access to educational opportunities.

The Association for Supportive Child Care (ASCC), through funding from First Things First, operates T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ARIZONA. The target population for T.E.A.C.H. scholarships are those early childhood professionals who are completing coursework in early childhood education while working in licensed and regulated center-based early care and education programs and family child care homes participating in Quality First.

After three years of implementation of the T.E.A.C.H. project in Arizona, with results that did not reach expected target service units and with significantly lower expenditures than budgeted, the Board requested that First Things First staff analyze the research and data and examine the efficacy, compatibility and suitability of the T.E.A.C.H. model and its connections within Quality First and the larger statewide professional development system.

Cami Ehler, FTF Program Specialist for Early Learning, told the Board that the assessment discovered some gaps in the way T.E.A.C.H. was being implemented, including: Quality First programs are not always prioritized for outreach, providers do not fully understand T.E.A.C.H. and its benefits to their programs; and, T.E.A.C.H. scholars do not receive enough academic advice and support.

Ehler said FTF has already started working with ASCC to implement strategies to address these issues, including making QF centers and homes a priority for outreach, improvements to how ASCC is managing recruitment and outreach, new positions to provide ore support for scholars and a more realistic growth trajectory for the program, given the experiences of other states.

In continuing to fund the T.E.A.C.H. model, Ehler also recommended adjustments to the financing model based on actual per-scholar expenditures, and working with the community colleges to provide additional support to help scholars succeed.

The Board accepted FTF staff recommendations. The full report is in the Board materials at [azfff.gov](http://azfff.gov), Attachment 10.



### **FRAMEWORK PRESENTED TO BUILD ARIZONA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

The Arizona Professional Development System-Building Workgroup (PDSBWG) is a working group of The BUILD Initiative, Arizona; convened and staffed by FTF. This report describes a model early childhood professional development system, the work

of the PDSBWG, and the recommendations for five system-building initiatives to be developed and implemented over the next two years.

The framework includes:

- the development of an advisory or governance structure;
- the development of workforce competencies to complement existing professional standards;
- steps to improve credentialing, including the development of an associate's degree in early childhood, and the development of a Prior Learning Assessment so that early childhood professionals can get college credit for existing knowledge;
- implementation of a professional workforce registry so that data can be used to continuously improve the early childhood workforce;
- the creation of a cross-sector coordinating body to oversee professional development funds and ensure that investments, policies and decisions are not made in silos; and,
- the development of a statewide website and registry to provide a statewide, centralized mechanism for disseminating information about workshops and community-based professional development and to assist in the gathering data about the early childhood workforce.

The two-year strategic plan the accompanied the recommendations, describes each of the recommended initiatives, the major deliverables and timelines, and the funding sources for each.

The full report is available in the Board materials at [azfff.gov](http://azfff.gov), Attachment 11.

**Save the date!** The next FTF Board meeting will be held April 8-9 in Payson.